

JERRY AND JEAN DETECTORS



CLARA INGRAM JUDSON

To
"Billy"
from
"Grannie" Rhye

Nov - 1923

JERRY AND JEAN
DETECTORS



JERRY and JEAN

DETECTORS

By Clara Ingram Judson

*Author of "Flower Fairies," "Billy Robin and His Neighbors,"
"Garden Adventures of Tommy Tittlemouse," "Foxy
Squirrel in the Garden," and "Garden
Adventures in Winter"*

*With pictures by
Dorothy Lake Gregory*



RAND McNALLY & COMPANY
CHICAGO NEW YORK

Copyright, 1923, by
RAND McNALLY & COMPANY



Made in U. S. A

To
Camp Highlands
in memory of good times



THE CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE TELEGRAM	9
THE COTTAGE AT FIVE PINES	19
THE DISCOVERY OF THE CABIN	31
THE FIGHT WITH FIRE	41
CAMP INSPECTION	51
THE DAY IN CAMP	63
THE TRIP TO EAGLE RIVER	74
ONLY A PATCH OF LIGHT	86
CAMPING ON RAZOR BACK	95
THE SECRET CUPBOARD	106





*Jerry stepped to the door of the chicken house and
looked at his sister*

THE TELEGRAM

THE front doorbell pealed loudly.

"You go!" called Jerry.

"You go!" shouted Jean at exactly the same moment.

Jerry laid down the old broom, set aside the bucket of whitewash, stepped to the door of the chicken house, and looked at his sister.

Jean got up from the pansy bed she had been weeding, tossed her brown bobbed hair from in front of her face, brushed a spot of mud from her right knee, and looked at her brother thoughtfully.

"You *are* worse," she decided after a careful inspection. "You should see that whitewash trimming on your nose, Jerry. Never mind, I'll go. My shoes are muddy, but I'll run round the house and see who it is."

Just at that minute the kitchen door screen banged noisily and nine-year-old Ted dashed out.

"Where's Mother?" he demanded.

"Gone marketing," replied Jean. Then she added, "Did you hear the doorbell, Ted?"

"'Deed I did," replied Ted. "It's on the front-hall table. Say, Jerry —"

"What's on the front-hall table?" interrupted his sister. "Surely not the doorbell."

"Course not, silly!" laughed Ted. "I mean the message is."

"Message?" asked Jean. "What message?"

"The telegram that came," explained Ted. "You heard the doorbell? Well, it was a telegraph boy and I signed the book myself. He said it was all right if I put my initials after Mother's name. And, anyway, Mother's never gone very long — it's for her."

"A telegram for Mother!" Jean opened her eyes so wide even Ted noticed her surprise. Telegrams didn't come every day, or every week, or even every month. What could be happening? Her mother had not spoken of expecting any message.

"I guess I'll go look at it to make sure," decided Jean. She brushed the dirt from her hands, glanced at the pansy bed to make sure that the job of weeding and picking off dead blooms was finished for the day, and started toward the house.

Hurriedly she ran across the lawn, up the flagstone walk to the kitchen door, and into the house. Strange how deserted a place could look just because Mother wasn't home! Ordinarily, Jean thought their home very

attractive. She was proud of the fact that, even though she was but twelve years old when the house was built a year ago, her mother had let her help select the new curtains and pillows and furniture they had bought, and had given her a real part in making the new house a home. She had taken sewing in the eighth grade this last year, and it had been such fun to know, from the things she and Mother had studied, and from their shopping trips, something about textiles and color schemes.

Now, however, the house didn't seem like a home. Her footsteps echoed lonesomely as she hurried down the hall, and every room seemed to shout, "Your mother isn't home! Your mother isn't home!"

On the little table close by the front door was the yellow envelope. Jean picked it up and looked at the address: "Mrs. George Daniels" — yes, that was her mother; "27 Edgemont Road" — that was the number of their gray house. The message must belong here — but what could it be?

"Now, am I not the stupid!" Jean said to herself suddenly. "Making all this fuss about a telegram! One would think I came from the backwoods and never had seen a telegram

before! And feeling so lonesome just because Mother, who stays at home *ages* for us, happened to have an errand to do. Now, Jeannette Wilmurs Daniels, sit right down at that piano and get your practicing done, or Jerry will have his chores all finished and beat you."

Such good advice was worth following, so Jean hurried to the lavatory, scrubbed her hands hard, and in just one minute more was practicing her scales in fine style.

It seemed no time at all, instead of the thirty-five minutes it really was, until a voice sounded at the door and Mother remarked, "You certainly are practicing well, Jean dear. Miss Henry is going to be pleased with that selection, I know."

Crash! Jean's hands descended on the keys as she turned around suddenly.

"O Mother! There's a telegram! Look quickly and see what it says."

"A telegram? For me?" exclaimed Mrs. Daniels as she set down her packages and picked up the yellow envelope.

Jean watched her mother's eyes as they traveled over the paper — once, twice, three times. But not a hint did she get of what the message might contain.

"Run and call Jerry and Ted," said Mrs. Daniels suddenly, "then we'll talk."

Puzzled, Jean dashed to the back door and called.

"Jerry! Ted! Come here quickly!" Something in her voice caught their instant attention, and they started for the house at once. "You certainly are a sight," laughed Jean as she looked at Jerry and his whitewash-spattered overalls. "But I have a feeling Mother doesn't want to wait. You may come in and stand on the old rug in the hall. Don't you dare step on the good one with those shoes. I know whitewash always comes off a chicken house when you don't want it to, but I don't know how it might act on the best rug."

"Wait a minute," said Jerry, listening at the door of the front hall. "Mother's at the 'phone. Sis, if you'll get me some slippers from upstairs I'll slip off these awful overalls and shoes. Then I shan't have to stand just so. It won't take a jiffy."

Jean hadn't waited to hear the end of his sentence. She dashed up the back stairs, snatched up his slippers, and was down again by the time he was ready for them. So when Mrs. Daniels hung up the receiver a second

later, three eager children awaited her in the pretty living room.

"I've been calling your father," she said excitedly, "and he's coming home right away, for the message says answer immediately — for goodness knows! I can't decide alone. Who ever would have guessed —"

"But, Mother," cried Jean, who thought she simply would explode if she had to wait another minute, "what do you have to decide? What's the message? What's it all about?"

Her mother slipped down into a big, comfortable chair and laughed.

"Well, Jeannie dear, I suppose you are tired of waiting. Look at the message yourself."

Jean took the yellow paper and read aloud: "Suddenly called to Europe on business. Cannot use Five Pines this summer. Will you take it? Answer immediately. Leaving tomorrow. Bob." Bob was Mrs. Daniels' older brother.

"Five Pines?" asked Jean. "Why, that's — that's Uncle Bob's precious island, isn't it?"

"Uncle Bob's precious island in Plum Lake, Wisconsin," replied Mrs. Daniels, "and it must be something either extremely nice or unusually important to take him to Europe instead of to Wisconsin at this time of the year —

he hasn't missed a summer in years, I am sure."

"And we can have it?" questioned Jerry doubtfully. "Go there? Live there? Just like it was our own?"

"Hooray for Uncle Bob!" cried Ted excitedly, rolling off the davenport and turning a somersault which landed him in the middle of the living room.

"While you are 'hooraying' for Uncle Bob, you'd better say another one for Europe," suggested Jean sagely. "It's Uncle Bob *and* Europe that are getting us there, you know."

"What's all the family powwow about?" questioned Mr. Daniels. His approach had not been heard, and his amazement at the scene in the living room was not surprising.

"We're going to Five Pines for all summer," announced Jean.

"It's business — Europe," added Jerry, trying to be manly and explain, but making the muddle all the worse for his father.

"And we'll fish and swim and you'll teach me how to canoe, won't you, Father?" added Ted.

"Now, if somebody will just take me into a corner and explain —" began Mr. Daniels.

Of course, nobody could do that, but, by all

talking at once and by Mrs. Daniels giving him the telegram to read while he was listening to four people, they gradually made him understand that they were actually being invited to Plum Lake for the summer.

"How about the chickens, Jerry?" he asked. Jerry had gone into quite a chicken business for the summer and hoped to make some money thereby.

"I'll get Dick to take them," replied Jerry. "He's been wanting some. If he doesn't want to buy them, I'll keep the ownership and he can operate on shares."

"Good business, son," Mr. Daniels proudly approved his boy's quick judgment.

"How about the garden, Jean?" Jean had bought seeds and had a modest vegetable and flower garden of her own.

"I'll see the Girl Scouts about it," answered Jean. "Maybe they would like to finish out the season. And I'd miss my profit any old day for Five Pines," she added happily.

"I suppose you never could get the sewing done and the house shut up?" Mr. Daniels said to his wife.

"Not before tomorrow morning," she laughed teasingly. "One thing is certain. If we go to Plum Lake no sewing will need to

be done. We'll just take old clothes and last year's bathing suits. It will be vacation for me, too, I know that."

"Then that leaves Ted as the only objector," said Mr. Daniels solemnly.

"Me!" exclaimed Ted in amazement. "Me? Why — why — why, I *want* to go!" And then he looked at his father carefully. Ted could never be really certain when his father was teasing and when he was in sober earnest. But this time a twinkle told Ted he was being teased. "You *know* I want to go, Dad," he cried, "so now we're all going."

"This is Wednesday," figured Mr. Daniels thoughtfully. "How about going up Friday evening? That will land us there before noon on Saturday, and the boys and I will get the old Evinrude going and run over for supplies while you women folks sweep out. Then Sunday night I'll come back to work again."

"But, Dad," objected Jerry, "can't you stay?"

"Not all summer, son," laughed his father. "But every two weeks at least I'll come up for two or three days, and then in August, when you know all the ropes and can give me a good time, I'll be able to stay for two whole weeks."

"Now let's decide what to take," said Jean, getting a tablet from the desk.

"Fishing things from the attic," dictated Jerry, "butterfly net, swimming suit, paddles — I think Uncle Bob said those he gave me two years ago were better than any he had — camera, camp stove —"

"Of course, don't bother with such trifles as clothes," laughed Mrs. Daniels.

"And a flashlight," suggested Jean, writing it down. "Don't you remember how Uncle Bob said they never could get along without a flashlight?"

"We'll get several, of different sizes," said Mr. Daniels.

"And I'll get those plans and make a radio," suggested Jerry eagerly.

But nobody heard, for at that moment Mrs. Daniels remembered to answer the telegram.

"Here we are all planning, and we haven't sent that message!" Quickly she went to the phone and, getting Western Union, dictated the message: "All delighted. Will go up Friday night. Wire us any instructions. Helen."

"We're really going?" questioned Jerry as she hung up the receiver. "Could you believe such luck? Just think how the fellows will stare when I tell them!"

THE COTTAGE AT FIVE PINES

THE next forty-eight hours were a blur of activity to the three Daniels children. When they weren't getting things out for the trunks, they were doing errands in the neighborhood, or helping with such odd bits of housework and cooking as must be done, even though a family may be packing up for the summer. There were the chickens to arrange for first. Dick, who lived in the brick house just across the alley, was only too glad to get them. Not being overburdened with capital, he preferred to take them on shares; he was to have half the profit for his work the rest of the summer, and Jerry the other half for his investment and the work thus far. Just to prove what good business men they were, they wrote it all out very carefully and had the paper witnessed by Mr. Daniels and Dicky's older brother.

"That's the way folks always ought to do," announced Jerry proudly, as he put his copy of the agreement in his desk. "Now we'll know just what to do when summer's over."

Then Jean got the Girl Scouts to take over her garden. There would be beans and carrots

and beets to sell, and the profits were to go to the hospital fund the girls were so eager to increase. There were four patrols in their troop, and each patrol was to have the job a week at a time, so it wouldn't be very much work for any one girl.

Mrs. Daniels knew that there would be dishes and cooking utensils at the cottage on Five Pines, but that she must take plenty of heavy blankets. Paper napkins would solve the table-linen problem and also part of the washing, but what to do with all the things Jerry insisted on taking was a puzzle, to be sure.

Finally two trunks containing such things as blankets, towels, camp supplies, photographic supplies, and fishing things were packed and locked. Then, soon after, the third trunk, filled with clothing, was also ready.

There was the usual last-minute flurry of locking cellar windows and repairing the catch on an attic window so it wouldn't bang, of forgetting where the keys of the trunks had been put and scurrying around to discover them. But finally everything was locked and bolted and the front door shut, and half an hour later the train for Plum Lake pulled

out of the station with the Daniels family safely, if a bit breathless, on board.

"My radio plans!" exclaimed Jerry just as the train got under way.

"What about them, son?" asked Mr. Daniels.

"Did you pack them, Mother?" asked Jerry. "I laid them by the brown trunk."

"Sorry, Jerry," replied his mother, "but I didn't see them. Didn't you pack them?"

"No, 'cause I thought you would want to," mourned Jerry.

"Well, don't let that bother you," laughed Mr. Daniels, "I'll send you some more when I get back to the office Monday. I fancy you'll find enough to do to keep you busy the first week without making a radio."

Jerry laughed happily. Nothing bothered him long when he was having such fun riding on the train. He got a folder and started checking off the stations.

"Dad!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Plum Lake! Why didn't we think of it before? That's where Camp Woodlands is — where Tim goes, you know." Tim was an old chum and neighbor of Jerry's who had moved away two years before and had been much missed ever since.

"Maybe we'll see him," added Jerry hopefully. "Is the camp far away?"

"Don't know exactly," replied Mr. Daniels, "but maybe your mother does."

"Oh, it's been years since I was up there," said Mrs. Daniels, "and the camp was small then. But I think it's on the Point where the land is high and thickly wooded. It's just across one arm of the lake from Five Pines. You know Plum Lake is long and winding, but our end is the biggest. It widens out and looks like a lake by itself. Oh, you will have lots of fun exploring! And maybe you can visit Tim — I'm sure they'll let you. Or perhaps he can come and spend a day with you."

Just then there was a first call for dinner, and the Daniels children scrambled to wash tidily for the much-prized treat of dining on the train.

Next morning they found their train was late. Not that that mattered a lot, for there was so much to see. Never before had the children seen such tall pines, such blackened stretches of land where forest fires had left ruin in their trail, and such numbers of lovely lakes.

Ted wanted to count, so Jerry obligingly sat on one side of the car and Ted on the

other, and each counted the lakes he saw on his own side. It was something of a puzzle when they reached Minocqua, for the train seemed to go right in the middle of the lake on a trestle; but peace was made by counting that lake, which was large anyway, for both sides.

"They tell me real native Indians live here," said Mr. Daniels as he came back from getting a breath of fresh air. "I think we'll have to try to drive down here some day and see whether we can find some."

It was past noon, with the train running quite late, when they reached Plum Lake station — a mere shelter in the midst of thick woods — and the Daniels family with three or four others descended from the train. Mrs. Daniels, who readily remembered directions, piloted them along the path and down to the lake a few hundred feet away. They had wired the hotel across the lake to send a boat to meet them, but no boat was there — only the cutter flying the flag of Camp Woodlands.

Seeing their dismay, the young man in charge of the cutter kindly offered to take them to the island and to leave a message at the hotel arranging for the transportation

of their trunks. Very happily they boarded the cutter and set out across the lake. Five Pines was very easily located. The tiny island lay well to the center of the broad end of the lake, and on it three great pines and two smaller ones stood out straight and fine above the lower growth which made the island a mass of green.

It was a real thrill to land at their own dock, on their own island, to find the key in the boathouse, and to run up the path and open the cottage that was to be their home for many weeks. To be sure, the path was overgrown with weeds, and the porch was tangled with cobwebs — but weeds and cobwebs only make an adventure more fun.

The children tossed off coats and hats and made a quick inspection of the house. There was a comfortable big living room with a great fireplace; a tiny kitchen with cupboards and cookstove, which opened onto both the porch and the living room; three tiny bedrooms, and on three sides of the house a great screened porch. In front there was a patch of cleared ground, large enough to be used for croquet or running games, but on all other sides thick brush nestled around the cottage. This gave one a feeling of being away, far

away, from the great world of people and cities.

At the foot of the bit of lawn was a sandy beach for bathing, and in the boathouse by the dock were an Evinrude and two canoes, as well as an old rowboat for fishing.

Uncle had sent a night letter saying that Old Man John would have the boats in readiness for use. The children needed no introduction to Old Man John, for they had often heard their uncle tell tales about this faithful worker. He had lived all his life near Plum Lake, and he was loved by every one of the summer campers who knew him.

"Sure enough!" exclaimed Jerry happily, as he inspected the boathouse. "Everything is shipshape and ready for use. Old Man John must be a corker. Wish he'd come round so we could see him."

"He will," replied Jean as she lifted a paddle inquiringly. "You know the camp man on the cutter said he would come round to see if we wanted to know about anything."

"Come on," cried Ted, "let's get our good clothes off and have some fun."

Knickers and sweaters and one pair each of old shoes had been carried in a suitcase, so the children did not have to wait for the

trunks to come, but could shed their city clothes at once. In about ten minutes they had chosen rooms — rooms so tiny that they were really only dressing rooms; cots would be set on the wide porch — and had dressed for fun and work.

Mr. Daniels got the Evinrude in order to go for supplies, Jerry carried in wood, Jean swept out, and Ted made himself generally useful as helper and errand boy, while Mrs. Daniels unpacked suitcases and made plans.

"You three boys," she finally announced, "had better go over to Sayner for supplies. You have the list. Be sure to get everything on it, for our order from the wholesalers in Chicago won't come for several days. And tell the postmaster we are here, so he will hold our mail. Now, skip!" she added laughingly, "and for goodness' sake don't forget matches and salt! I can't find either in the cupboard."

At that minute footsteps were heard on the porch, and the Daniels family, one and all, turned to see an old man in shabby work clothes coming up the path to the cottage.

"You must be John," said Mr. Daniels.

"Old Man John," corrected the old man, with a sunny smile, and the children could

tell from the kindly twinkle in his eye just why everyone liked him so well.

"Came over to see if you want help," he added. "City folks, they sometimes don't know where to find the matches!" He chuckled to himself as though that were a great joke.

"Matches and salt — we can't find either," said Mrs. Daniels smilingly. "I was just sending to Sayner for some."

"Always look for a tin box," said Old Man John. He went into the kitchen, found an old tin box on the shelf, and opened it to show them a box of matches and a sack of salt.

"They don't hurt each other — matches and salt don't," he said, "so keep out mice and keep out damp and keep 'em together. That's what I do. Now how about the boats? I fixed 'em this morning — the letter didn't come till yesterday, but I cleaned 'em up best I could. Got to run along now — 'Cap' needs me. But if you want anything tomorrow, you just come to camp and ask for Old Man John. I'll do anything you need — be glad to."

He shambled off down the path with Ted walking along beside him asking questions about camp.

As he put off, the hotel boat arrived with the trunks. As soon as these were carried to

the house, the boys and Mr. Daniels set off for Sayner, and Mrs. Daniels and Jean began the job of unpacking and straightening.

Dashing to the lawn for a reassuring look at the lake between jobs, Jean spied the Evin-rude coming back. In a few minutes it had bumped the dock, looking most interesting with its load of supplies.

"I wish it was supper time now," sighed Ted. "I was so afraid we'd get left on the train that I didn't eat half enough lunch."

"We'll have it any time you say," said his mother obligingly, "only I thought maybe you'd like to try a swim — Father will have so few days, and it's warm enough even though it's after four."

She didn't need to hint twice. The family took to the water without even stopping to finish unloading the supplies, and stayed in until Mr. Daniels noticed that lips were getting blue and ordered everyone out.

"Isn't this fun?" said Jean, an hour later, as she and Jerry hung out the bathing suits on the line back of the house. "I feel like a queen, and as though this was all our own kingdom. Now if only folks would come and call, so we could have the fun of inviting them to land —"

Just then from the lake there sounded a boyish, "Who-o-o-o! Who-o-o-o! Hi! *Jerry!*"

"It's Tim!" shouted Jerry, and, dropping suits, pins, and all, he dashed down to the dock with Jean close at his heels.

Yes, it was Tim. He had just got word from the captain of the cutter of Jerry's arrival and had come over to see if by any possibility the news could be true — he could hardly believe the good luck. With him was Jack, a fine-looking boy about Jerry's age.

"You fellows better come up to the house," said Jerry, but the boys explained that there was little time now for a call.

"We'll talk here while you finish unloading," suggested Tim when he saw that some market supplies were in the boat. "We have early supper at camp, but we'll come over right afterward, and maybe you can go out with us. Know how to paddle? And swim?"

"Swim, of course, silly!" laughed Jerry. "But I don't know how to paddle very well."

"I guess that's all right then," replied Tim. "You see, 'Cap' has us ask anybody we take in a canoe. No one goes in a canoe with us unless he is a good swimmer. Unless you've forgotten all you knew since I moved away, you qualify."

Just then a bugle at camp blew the first call for supper, and the two visitors hurriedly pushed off for home.

"See you in an hour," called Tim as the distance between the canoe and the island increased.

"I haven't a bugle," called a voice from the house, "but supper's nearly ready all the same. Bring the last load from the boat as you come, Jerry," added his mother, "and make your coming snappy — we're all hungry."

They had agreed on no frills in cooking, but Jerry was ready to declare that never in his life had he sat down to so wonderful a meal as that. Certain it was that plain chops, baked potatoes, muffins, and fruit never had tasted so good.

When they had finished, they sat on the porch, just where they had eaten, and enjoyed the splendor of the view down the lake until Tim's call reminded them that if the lake was to be explored before nightfall they would have to be up and going. Jerry went with his two friends, and the others went in the bigger canoe, with Mr. and Mrs. Daniels paddling bow and stern.

"Isn't it wonderful?" sighed Jean happily. "And we're going to be here all summer!"

THE DISCOVERY OF THE CABIN

MAY Ted and I explore 'way down the lake today?" asked Jerry as the Daniels family lingered over the breakfast table on Wednesday morning.

Mr. Daniels had gone back to the city Sunday night, as he had planned, and life in the little cottage at Five Pines was settling down to a more or less regular routine. House-keeping, more fun than work in such a place, paddling, trips to Sayner on any sort of an excuse — supplies, mail, or inquiries — and swimming both morning and afternoon were the main things to do. Then of course there was fishing by twilight, planning to make a dark room out of the pantry, so that kodak pictures could be developed at once, and, in addition, fitting up a radio. The radio couldn't get under way until the plans Mr. Daniels was to send had arrived. Jerry had been much disappointed when they didn't come Tuesday afternoon on the first mail after his father's return.

"Oh, take me along, Jerry," coaxed Jean eagerly, before her mother could reply to Jerry. "Mother said she wanted to write some

letters this morning, and you know I'd love to go along and paddle."

"But I was going to paddle," objected Ted.

"We can take turns," suggested Jean hopefully.

"I don't know about turns for paddling," said Mrs. Daniels. "How would you manage the change?"

"When we're close to shore, so we could wade in if the canoe tipped," said Jerry quickly. "Now don't you start thinking we're going to be careless, Mother," he added soberly. "We want this vacation to be a success as much as you do. And it won't be if any of us gets spilled into the lake. We'll take no chances, so don't worry."

"That's good sense, Jerry," approved his mother. "I'm just thinking about that exploring, though," she added. "There is really nothing more interesting down the lake than nearer the island, and it's all new to you. Why don't you explore near home today, and then when you're more experienced we'll all go and take lunch and spend a whole day exploring and do the lower part of the lake."

"That's fine," said Jerry. "We can go over to Star Bay this morning and then skirt round the shore to Star Creek."

"And we can go up Star Creek a way. Tim says we'll think it the queerest place we ever saw — mosquitoes by the million, pitcher plants, lots of lovely water flowers, and everything. I'd love to explore there."

"May we take a lunch?" asked Ted.

"Oh, some cookies, if you like," said his mother, "but don't stay long enough for lunch this first time. If you notice, you can tell by the sun about what time it is. Now let's hustle through the chores, and then you may go."

Dishes, beds, sweeping out, and burning garbage never take long when the workers have something pleasant in view. In just half an hour the three children dragged the canoe out onto the dock, slipped it into the water, arranged cushions and paddles, and pushed off.

"May we land anywhere?" asked Jerry just as they were about to go.

"Not if it seems to be private grounds and you might be in the way," said his mother. "But if you see something interesting and there seems to be no one around whom you might bother, I think there could be no objection to landing for a few minutes. Of course you wouldn't make a fire."

With a shove for the boat and a good-by for his mother, Jerry sent the graceful canoe skimming through the water, and they were off. It was a little hard to get the knack of paddling together, and of course they did their worst just when they wanted to show Mother how skillful they were. But after a few strokes they settled down to a rhythm that took them skimming over the smooth water. It was an ideal day for canoeing — just breeze enough to be pleasant, but no wind.

“Let’s cut across toward the camp,” suggested Ted, whose turn it was to sit in the middle, “and go as close to the shore as we can. Maybe we can see some of the boys.”

So they headed straight for the camp and skirted close enough to see boys having a delightful time getting canoes in order on the broad dock.

“It must be work hour,” said Jerry. “Tim says they have one every morning, and each boy has to do something useful, like building a road, or overhauling canoes, or working on the tennis courts or in the shop. I think camping must be lots of fun. Tim says he’s going to ask ‘Cap’ if I may come to visit some day.”

Ted sighed. Why *would* people think that Jerry could do so much more than he could?

Eleven wasn't so awfully much older than nine! Now if only *he* had a friend at camp —

His gloomy thoughts were interrupted by a call from the dock.

"Hi there! In the canoe!"

Jerry turned the canoe and took a few quick strokes toward the dock.

"Are you Jerry Daniels?" asked one of the men counselors.

"Yes, I am," replied Jerry.

"Well, there's a letter for you in the office," continued the man. "The postmaster at Sayner got it in with our mail, and we didn't know who you were until this morning when one of the boys said he thought you lived on the island."

"I'll come right up and get it," suggested Jerry.

"Sorry, but it's locked up in the safe just now," replied the man, "and 'Cap,' who has the key, isn't here. We'll send it over to the island. Old Man John's going that way on an errand, and he'll leave it before noon."

So, saying thank you, Jerry paddled away.

"I'll bet that's my plans," he said. "I knew Dad would send them. But why weren't they addressed to Five Pines? And how could they get mixed up?"

"Now don't be hunting mystery, Jerry Daniels," teased Jean. "Maybe Father's secretary forgot the whole address. Or maybe the address was all there and the postman was asleep. Maybe —

"Look at that diving stand!" she interrupted herself as the canoe rounded a bend and the diving stand for seniors in camp came into view. "Think of diving off that!"

"Pooh! I'll bet I could," said Jerry. "But we'd better practice. Maybe I can build our stand higher so we'd learn to dive better."

As they chatted, they paddled on around the bend into the arm of the lake called Star Bay, and across the water toward the heavy woods on the far side.

"There doesn't seem to be a soul around," said Jerry.

"I'll bet Indians used to live here," Ted fairly whispered, so great was the effect of the stillness. "They used to go round paddling, just like us; and they'd land and explore —"

"Let's land there," cried Jean, pointing to a spot where a strip of beach seemed to invite them.

It was so shallow that the canoe grated on the pebbly bottom when they were more than twenty feet from the shore.

"I'll take off my shoes and wade in," suggested Jerry. "That'll make the canoe lighter. Phew! Smell the dead fish!"

"We ought to hunt the fish and then use our paddles to bury it in the sand," said Jean, who had been reading woods stories. "That's what they do. Jerry, you —"

"Jerry! *Run!* Come back! What *is* it?"

Jerry whirled around to look in the face of a small, blackish creature that was staring at him with beady eyes. And, even as he looked, the creature seemed to grow bigger and bigger, and great pointed quills stood out all around it. Desperately Jerry tried to remember whether such creatures are likely to hurt a person. He thought it was a porcupine, but what do porcupines do to one?

Well, Jerry didn't wait to see, but ran back, hopped into the canoe, gave it a shove, and pushed out into the lake. It wasn't until they were so far away that the creature seemed a tiny speck that Jean thought of something.

"He was hunting that dead fish," she announced. "I just know he was! And he wouldn't have hurt us a bit."

"Then we'll go back," said Jerry willingly, but Jean's little scream showed him she liked porcupines better at a safe distance.

"Maybe we'd better not land," said Jean as they idly paddled along.

"It's all right if we get a good place," said Jerry. "Now look at that! There's a fine landing place."

"And look at the house," said Jean, "all boarded up and shut tight. I never noticed that before."

"We're on the other side of the Point, you see," said Jerry. "Maybe it doesn't show from there — see how high the trees back of it are?"

They stopped the canoe with a backward turn of the paddles and looked at the scene before them. Great, tall pines in the background made shadows as dark as evening over the house. Thickets of bushes and vines grew in profusion and gave the place a lonesome, deserted look. The house itself was built of great logs crossed at the corners. It looked strong enough to withstand a hundred winters. Small casement windows with tiny panes of glass were streaked with dirt, and some rubbish and a broken chair littered the porch.

"Wouldn't it make a great old movie!" exclaimed Ted. "It would be called the smugglers' den, I know."

"Let's explore," suggested Jerry. "We

surely need not fear a porcupine here, and goodness knows it's plain enough no folks are round." As he spoke, he pulled the canoe up to a broken-down dock, tied it to a post, and stepped out, his brother and sister close behind.

It was impossible for them to walk up to that house without tiptoeing. The great towering pines and the tangle of lower growth made a dim twilight out of the bright morning. Jerry tried to talk loudly and walk straight ahead, but the first thing he knew he was whispering and tiptoeing, and then even the whispers faded away, and in silence the three crept up to the house.

On the side nearest them a great stone chimney gave hint of an old-fashioned fireplace within. Facing the Point and at a slight angle to the direction in which they were walking was the porch. It was falling into decay. A few boards were missing, but it showed by its width and length that one day there had been room for many gay visitors to enjoy the place.

"Let's go all round the house before we go on the porch," suggested Jean.

So around they went, tiptoeing in the dimness; pushing their way through the weeds of what once was a spacious garden, around

past the kitchen door and back to the other side of the porch.

"There are no shutters on that nearest window," remarked Ted hopefully.

"I'm going to look in," said Jerry boldly.

Onto the creaking boards of the porch and up to the window he stepped. Into the gloom of the inside he peered. But before he had had a chance to make out anything in the dimness, the back door of the cabin slammed, and footsteps sounded around the cabin.

Jerry jumped off the porch, and the three children crouched behind thick bushes just in time to see Old Man John — faithful old John who wouldn't scare a person if he could help it — go around to the Point, step into a boat, and make off. He was gone before they got their breath enough to speak.

"Let's go," said Jean. "I've explored enough for today. Let's get out where it's sunny." So the three children scampered down to their canoe and pushed out into the lake in the sunshine toward Five Pines.

But Jerry wondered many times after that about how different things might have been if only he had stopped Old Man John that morning. But of course he little suspected then the secret hidden in that deserted cabin.

THE FIGHT WITH FIRE

HAS Old Man John been here?" asked Jerry eagerly as, after fastening the canoe and running up to the cottage, he came upon his mother on the porch.

"Old Man John!" she questioned in surprise. "What made you think he would be?"

"They told me at camp that they had a letter for me," replied Jerry. "It was taken there, by mistake of course, and he was to bring it over before noon."

"Well, he hasn't been here," said Mrs. Daniels, "for I've been right at the cottage all the time, and he couldn't have missed me. Maybe he'll come soon. Don't worry. No doubt it's your radio directions from your father."

"I'm starved," interrupted Ted. "When's dinner?"

"And, Mother, you should hear what all we *did!*" cried Jean. And while dinner was being placed upon the table, Mrs. Daniels heard all about the morning adventure.

"That must be the Dickson place you saw," she said, as they sat down to dinner. "I remember that Colonel Dickson had a wonderful

log cabin on the Point. He had a number of children, and each child had a cabin of his own, back of the house. Then there was one dining room and kitchen for all. If you had walked back on the ridge you would have seen all the cabins standing in a row. Such good times as that family did have! I remember Bob often spoke of them."

"But what was Old Man John doing there?" asked Jerry.

"He was Colonel Dickson's gardener, if I remember rightly," said Mrs. Daniels. "And Bob said that since the Dickson place has been closed he lives in camp. I suppose he's a sort of helper or caretaker or something like that. He's a faithful old fellow, but a bit queer, I believe. Strange that you ran into him there. I wonder what he was doing."

Jerry wondered too, but sitting in the bright sunshine on their porch it seemed ridiculous indeed to say right out just how *much* he was wondering about Old Man John's visit to the cabin.

After dinner came a quiet hour when everyone read or wrote or napped. Jerry mourned the lack of his radio plans, for this would have been a wonderful time to study them out. He had almost decided just where on the roof

the wires were to go — if, after seeing the directions, that selection seemed right.

But the hour soon passed. Then there was the trip to Sayner for mail, swimming, and early supper — such a busy afternoon that Jerry had no time to paddle over to camp to get the missing letter.

At six-thirty Tim appeared. "Come on, go canoeing," he begged as he appeared at the porch. "I can stay until eight, and we could get a long way and back by then."

"But we were going too," said Ted.

"I want to finish my book," said Mrs. Daniels. "Why don't you and Jerry go in your canoe, Tim, and Jean and Ted follow where you lead? Then in half an hour they can come back for me."

This plan agreed upon, the four children ran down to the dock and pushed off. They paddled briskly across the lake to the west, skirted in near the shore, and headed down the lake toward the hotel a couple of miles away.

As they passed the headland, Tim pointed to a pretty cottage set in the tall pines on the hill. "That's 'Cap's' cottage," he announced. "Cap" was the much-loved owner and director of Camp Woodlands.

"Is that 'Cap' there?" asked Jerry, pointing to a man walking through the woods just above the shore.

"I should say not!" said Tim firmly. "'Cap' doesn't smoke. And if he did he would know better than to throw away a lighted cigar end as that man has."

Tim looked carefully, but just then the man hesitated, so, supposing he was stamping out the light, Tim paddled on and thought no more of the incident.

Twenty minutes later Jean and Ted, going back to the island for their mother, paddled by the same place.

"Somebody must have a camp fire," said Ted idly, as he glanced up through the trees.

"They wouldn't have a camp fire here, near the houses," said Jean. Then she looked carefully. "But they have. And it's getting bigger. Strange we can't see or hear the people."

"Maybe it's a forest fire," suggested Ted.

"Ted Daniels! It just is!" shouted Jean excitedly. "Call the boys! We must put it out!" And as quick as a flash she turned to the shore and beached the canoe.

Fortunately the older boys were within call. They heard her cry as it rang out, but did not

understand her words, so they made double-quick time coming to the spot.

"She's found a fire!" cried Tim excitedly, when he came near enough to see. "It's that careless smoker. We should have landed to make sure his cigar was out. And it's so close to 'Cap's' house! I've a bucket with bait here; that'll make one pail."

"And here's an old can; that'll make another," said Jerry as he spied a gallon can lying on the sand, washed up by the waves.

Quickly and without wasting a word the children organized a bucket line. Tim stayed in the water to do the filling. Jean stood by the fire to pour, and Jerry was the one to scramble up the steep hillside with the full buckets. As soon as Jean had poured the water on the blaze she tossed the empty bucket or can right to Tim, saving the time it would take to carry it.

While they were doing that, Ted stamped and beat at the creeping flame and cleared away dead leaves from its path, hoping in this way to keep it in check.

One bucketful, two, four, six — and it seemed as though the fire was lower. Eight, ten — Jerry was getting winded with the quick scramble up the steep hillside, but

there wasn't time to wait for breath — they were getting it out.

Ted was panting, too, with excitement and effort, when Jean screamed, "There it is again! Over there!"

Sure enough! Ten feet away a brand-new flame was breaking out. Whether it had caught from a spark or whether a bit of flame had crept unnoticed over the dry peat didn't matter — the flame was there and growing bigger.

"I'll have to go to camp for help," cried Tim. "You can beat me running, Jerry, but I know the way. Guess I'd better go! Keep 'er down. I'll hurry like mad." And he was off.

Left alone, the three Daniels children worked harder than ever. They were wet with perspiration and blackened with the smoke, which had now increased in volume, but they fought the flame like tigers, for, even though they knew so little of the dreadful dangers of forest fires, they could see close by through the trees the captain's pretty cottage, and they knew, by the way the fire spread in spite of them, that it would make short work of a little wooden cottage, once it got under way.

Splash went the water; down clattered a bucket, and Ted had the second one full before Jerry was back for another and ready for his next dash up the hill.

"Jerry," cried Jean breathlessly, "there it is over there!" And she pointed to another place where a sudden spark broke out into flame.

"Don't lose your head, Sis," warned Jerry. "We've got to stay with it until they come. As long as we keep between the fire and the house, we can hold it."

It seemed hours before help came. Really it was less than ten minutes, for halfway on his mile run to headquarters Tim had had the good luck to meet two of the counselors. They sent Tim on with the message, but they themselves made a dash for the dining hall close by, took all the buckets and pans they could carry, and ran pell-mell toward the scene. After ten minutes more of desperate work with the help of the two fresh workers, a large party arrived from camp. A bucket line was formed up the hill; the water was passed from one to the other, saving the time and strength needed for that steep climb. Old tent canvas was used for beating out fresh little bursts of flame as fast as they were

discovered, the water being saved for the biggest blaze.

It wasn't easy, and for a few minutes it looked as though the little cottage might go.

But finally every bit of flame was gone, though here and there a spark, smoldering in the twilight, warned them that there was still danger.

"You older boys spread out and make a guard line" — Tim recognized the captain's friendly voice — "and keep a close watch, while I see who discovered the fire and try to learn how it happened."

A flash from his pocket light went round the little circle, and there, leaning against a tree close in front of him, very tired, breathless and dirty, and with a great hole burned in the front of her dress, was Jean.

"And you? Who are you? You've been helping too?" "Cap" asked one question after another, as he turned the flash all about her to make sure she was not burned.

"Jean and I, we found the fire and then we put it out," announced Ted. "Anyway we *almost* had it out, only it started up again."

The laugh which greeted this explanation did everyone good and gave Jean a chance to get her breath.

Then, with continuous supplementing remarks by the three boys, she told the captain how they had been canoeing, had seen the blaze, and had tried to put it out.

"And I think I know who started it all," volunteered Tim, who knew that question would be coming next. "It was a man smoking. He threw away his light, but we thought he stamped it out. Maybe he was from the hotel — he walked in that direction."

"Dangerous business, this throwing away lights," said the captain with a shake of his head. "We might not always be so fortunate as to have it discovered at once. Tim, you and your friends did a fine job, and the whole camp is grateful. You used good judgment — trying to put it out first and then running for help while there was still time. Don't you want to introduce your friends to us?"

Tim did the honors, and when the captain learned who his helpers were he was more than pleased to learn that he owed the safety of his house to the niece and nephews of his old friend on Five Pines.

"I think we'll have to get acquainted," he said smilingly. "Jerry, come over and spend all day tomorrow in camp." Ted swallowed a lump in his throat — but wait —

"Ted," the captain continued, "we want you too. You shall be guest of honor at dinner in the midgets' dining room. And Jean, we haven't much to interest you, but if you and your mother would like to come over for inspection at eight-thirty tomorrow morning, the officer of the day will be honored to take you over the camp."

The children could hardly believe their ears. All invited to camp! Even a girl to visit it — and a whole day for the boys!

"And now for home," added "Cap." "You children should not be out this late without a flashlight to warn other boats. Take mine, Tim. See them home and then report to me. I want a description of that man, the smoker. I'll have to look him up tomorrow and make sure that he does not repeat that dangerous business."

With the brilliant flash to guide them, the two canoes made their way across the lake to where Mrs. Daniels was anxiously waiting for them.

"To think what a day this has been!" sighed Jerry as he tumbled into bed after a good scrub. "First a porcupine, then a deserted cabin, and then a forest fire with us for heroes. I wonder what will happen next!"

CAMP INSPECTION

WHEN the "rising call" blown by the camp bugler floated across the lake at six-thirty the next morning, the Daniels family was already up and stirring, for wasn't this the great day when camp was to be visited? Well, to be sure!

Getting up at Five Pines wasn't such a hard job as at home, anyway, for with so very many interesting things to do and only a few weeks in which to do them, a person couldn't stay in bed too long — indeed, no!

It was Ted's morning to get the bathing suits, and he dashed out, snatched up the suits, which were still damp, and dumped them all on the kitchen floor.

"Here, give me mine!" cried Jean, as she poked her head from the dressing room. So Ted obligingly thrust her suit and his mother's inside the door and took his and Jerry's to their room. There was many a shiver as the cold suits were put on, but the children didn't really care, as a quick plunge into the water would soon make everything all right. Suddenly there was a shriek from Ted — a heart-breaking, piercing shriek.

"What's the matter? Boys, let me in!" insisted Mrs. Daniels, but at that minute Ted dashed out of his room clutching at his back and screaming at the top of his lungs.

The others ran after him, but he screamed so hard and danced around so madly that it was impossible to get near him.

Finally Jerry caught him and held him long enough to thrust his hand down along the shoulders of his swimming suit and bring out — a bat, a timid, fluttering, blind little bat that had been taking a morning nap in Ted's shirt!

Ted stopped screaming, partly because he was out of breath and partly to look at the creature, but it wasn't until after a plunge from the pier and a good brisk swim that he felt really sure there were not more bats snooping around his armholes.

Morning chores were done at lightning speed, and if the sheets weren't smoothed just so or the wood piled in the box in perfect order, no one noticed. Jean put on her best white middy blouse in honor of the occasion, but the boys, warned by Tim, knew better than to dress up. Tim had told them tales of visiting boys who wore neckties — such a civilized thing as that! and who were promptly

dumped into the "drink" for their dandyism. Jerry liked the lake and swimming, and so did Ted, but they preferred jumping into it voluntarily. So they turned up sleeves and turned in collars and wore their oldest shoes. Nothing like being safe!

The captain had told them that inspection was at eight-thirty, and Tim had warned them to be prompt, so at eight-fifteen they set out from Five Pines — Ted and Jerry in one canoe, for they were to stay all day, and Mrs. Daniels and Jean in the other, for they would soon return home. As the call for inspection was blown, the two canoes pushed up to the main dock, and the captain himself was there to greet them.

"Good morning, Mrs. Daniels," he said pleasantly. "It is a real pleasure to welcome the sister of my old friend. And with the welcome, I want to tell you of our appreciation of the splendid service your children did for me and the whole camp last evening when they discovered and put out that dangerous fire."

"You are kind to speak of it," replied Mrs. Daniels, "and I must admit I'm rather proud of their quickness and ingenuity. Did you learn who started the fire?"

"The children's description," replied the captain, "fits one of the hotel guests who has been here for a few days. He has been searching for a summer home. He likes Plum Lake, I am told, and wants to buy here, though he plainly knows very little of woods. But, as he left by automobile early this morning, I fancy we are in no more danger from him around here. I am really sorry, though, to miss the chance of showing him the damage he did to our hillside.

"But that bugle was for inspection. Boys, would you rather go with the rest of us, or will you first let Tim show you the camp unofficially?"

Jerry hesitated. He was eager to go with Tim and meet the fellows and all, but the officer of the day, with his notebook and military air, looked very interesting. He couldn't help wondering just what regular inspection might be like.

"We might arrange it this way," suggested the captain when he saw the hesitation. "Go with the group while the senior camp is being inspected and then run along with the boys for the rest of the day."

That suited the boys perfectly, and inspection began.

Down the hill to the right was the senior camp. There were several tents and wooden lodges where the boys from upper high-school classes lived. On the other side of the hill, but so placed as also to face the lake, was the junior camp. There the boys from junior high-school grades lived. And down through the woods, nearer the director's own home, was a group of eight or ten large lodges where the "midgets" — the boys who were not yet eleven years old — made their home. By this plan the hundred and more boys of the camp could come together sometimes, and yet for daily living and play they were with boys of their own age.

Jean stayed close by her mother. She felt a little lost among so many, many boys; but before they had reached the bottom of the hill a sweet voice behind them called, "I'm sorry to be late, but I must say thank you to the fine girl who helped save our cottage last evening."

Mrs. Daniels turned, and there close beside her was a charming lady who introduced herself as Mrs. Marston, the captain's wife.

"I'm glad to know your name," said Jean frankly as she looked into the friendly eyes. "The boys just say 'Cap' all the time, and I

wondered last evening what your truly name could be."

Mrs. Marston laughed. "We're so used to that we never think of it," she said. "Mr. Marston is 'Cap' to everybody up here. But we will talk later, for I know you want to see inspection."

As they approached the lodge, Jerry noticed that the boys stopped talking. The officer of the day looked over the place carefully. It seemed to be in perfect order — tidy, beds made, no clothes lying about — and the visitors were much relieved when the officer said, "You fellows know how to camp."

Mrs. Marston explained that there was a very keen, friendly rivalry among the boys of different tents as to who should have the best record for the year. One point daily was taken off for a bed poorly made, clothes or personal things lying about, or towels not properly cared for. A towel should be hung on a line or on two hooks, so it could dry out well.

"That makes you one hundred for the day," said the officer. "You fellows are keeping it up pretty well — a hundred each day so far."

The boys at the lodge grinned. They were proud of their record, prouder than they

would admit before folks, and never in the world would they tell how careful they were every morning to look after each camper in order that they might keep that record unbroken.

One lodge or tent after another was inspected, and all seemed to be in perfect order.

Mrs. Marston explained to the visitors that for years they had used large tents for the boys, but that they had tried out a few wooden lodges, and, as they had proved satisfactory, the tents were being replaced, a few each year.

"The lodges make good shelter from weather for the campers," she added, "and also make fine places for keeping things in winter. Canoes, boats, benches — everything has to be shut up snug before snow comes."

Jerry looked around the camp, astir with activity, and tried to imagine what it might be like with no one there. No boats, no tents, no folks — how lonesome it would seem!

"Who stays here and puts them all away?" asked Jerry.

"Old Man John has charge of the job and of the camp during winter," answered Mrs. Marston. "His son is married and lives over near the hotel. Of course he does the heaviest work, as John is getting feeble. But John

has been faithful for years and feels it is his work, so he still has charge. He stays here all winter and watches everything while his son goes away on logging trips."

Instantly Jerry thought of the deserted cabin on the Point. Perhaps that was John's home. Maybe he belonged there, and there wasn't any mystery after all. Why not ask now and settle the thing once for all?

"He lives over on the Point, doesn't he, Mrs. Marston?" Jean had asked the question ahead of Jerry. Evidently she, too, had thought the same thing.

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Marston, "no one lives there. That's the old Dickson place, and nobody has been there for years. It's a pity, too, as it's a beautiful place and we hate to see it so deserted. No, John lives in a little cabin down near the fire lane. We must show you some day."

So John didn't live on the Point! Did he have any business there? That was the next thing to discover, but one couldn't be rudely asking questions all the time.

Down through the junior camp they went, inspecting. Jerry and Tim had disappeared, but Ted was still following. He wanted to see all of this inspection business.

One tent for five boys in junior camp got ninety-eight — two towels under the bed. Everyone else got one hundred.

"It must be awfully easy," said Ted finally. "They all get a hundred, or nearly."

"It's not so easy as you think," replied the officer, a popular college man who was one of the counselors in camp. "But the boys all try, and they help one another. By now they know pretty well what to do, and they see that everyone does it. At first some of the scores run much lower until they get used to camp housekeeping. Now here's a tent where there are two new boys. Let's see whether the older ones have watched them as they should."

He stepped into the lodge — beds O. K.; towels in order; no clothes spread around. All well so far, though not a boy was in sight to take credit.

Then the officer lifted a trunk — rolls of lint danced into view. Another trunk came up — more lint.

"I don't believe you fellows have swept out this morning," called the officer, and dismayed exclamations from behind the tent showed that he was right.

Five boys from eight to nine years old ran

around the tent and looked with chagrin at the officer.

"We didn't know you were here yet," said one.

"Didn't you hear the bugle call for inspection?" asked the officer.

"Yes, but we were hunting," said another.

"Hunting what?" asked the officer, surprised. "Explain."

Jack Wright, the counselor for that tent, stepped up to the officer.

"It's the queerest thing," he said. "These fellows say they don't understand it, or I'd think one of them was playing a joke on the others. Things have been missing for a week from around here. First a letter. Then some music. And Bert says he knows he put it on his bed when he came from his lesson. He's the one who's taking violin, you know. Doug says he saw it there yesterday and thought of taking it up to the office but forgot it. Then Dick never got the two letters he should have had yesterday. We know those came, for Doug saw Old Man John bringing them down here for him. It's certainly got me going. We were so busy hunting we forgot to finish cleaning up. How much are you going to take off?"

"Unusual circumstances," said the officer thoughtfully. "I'll take only one today. But if you slip again, fellows," he added, "it's one off for each trunk and an extra five for not keeping track of your things. That's part of your job."

The five young campers heaved a sigh of relief. Only one off wasn't so bad. Their rival tent, next door, might lose a point some day too. But things must be perfect tomorrow, so they busied themselves with plans for finding the missing possessions.

"Now I guess that's about all there is to be seen," said Mrs. Marston as they turned away smiling over the boys' pride and excitement, "except the infirmary. That is used mostly as a library for the younger boys, for we haven't much illness."

After inspecting the pretty brown infirmary, set under the pines and cared for by a charming white-capped nurse whom the campers adored, Mrs. Marston chatted a few minutes with her guests, and then they all went to the dock.

"Feel perfectly safe about your boys," said their hostess as Mrs. Daniels and Jean pushed off. "They'll be home after supper, and they'll be well looked after in the meantime."

Mrs. Daniels and Jean had plans of their own for the rest of the day. Jean was as interested as her mother in flowers, and they had decided to take this chance to paddle up Star Creek in search of rare flowers and plants. They went to Five Pines first and slipped into old clothes. Reaching for flowers from a canoe is risky business, and wetting old clothes is much less bothersome than giving nice ones a ducking.

Half an hour later they put off from their own dock. In the canoe were stowed two tin botany cans for specimens, and a lunch box with fruit and sandwiches and some delicious bran cookies Jean had made all by herself. They also took some knives for cutting stems, a few rags, and a bottle of citronella — mosquitoes like marshy places as well as do flowers, and they thought it wise to be prepared to ward off the pests.

"Isn't this fun!" cried Jean some time later, when, after leaving the big lake, they pushed up the little creek between narrow banks thickly covered with a tangle of plants and vines. "You feel as though you were in another world. I wonder what the boys are doing now! They can't be having more fun than we are!"

THE DAY IN CAMP

WHEN Jerry and Tim left the others during inspection, it wasn't because inspection wasn't interesting, but because there was work to be done. "Cap" had told Tim that his friend could do whatever Tim did, and Tim's special job for the morning was helping to make a road.

Jerry knew about as much about road making as he did about the Fiji Islands, but he was willing to learn. So when Tim whispered to him that they'd better "dig out for the job," he went most willingly.

They went back of the camp, past the tennis courts and the garden, and along the road to where a new garage was being built.

"I worked there last week," said Tim proudly. "I put up those uprights and I laid the floor — well, anyway, I helped lay it."

"Do you work all day?" asked Jerry.

"Goodness, no!" laughed Tim. "Only two hours in the morning. We work on something for the camp each morning, and we change about each week. Sometimes we repair boats or docks, and sometimes we repair tennis courts. This year we're building a

road and a garage, and all the fellows like that. It's fun to build things. Now, come on! The road's down here. John'll be along pretty soon."

John, Jerry discovered a few minutes later, was one of the counselors and the man who, this week, was in charge of the road "gang."

In the course of a few minutes seven boys had turned up, and each was given a task. Two picked up stones and tossed them over to the side of the road that was to be. Three cleared the way of brush, and the other two helped John cut down small saplings standing in the roadway. It was exciting work for a newcomer. Jerry was in the group that cleared away brush, but he was so interested in those who were cutting down young trees that he couldn't keep his eyes on his work.

Soon a man and a horse appeared on the scene, and the boys all stopped to watch Prince, the old horse, pull stumps. George, his driver (who, Jerry afterward learned, was Old Man John's son), and the faithful horse worked together amazingly well.

Prince was in harness, and at the back of the traces was a chain drag. This was hooked tightly around the stump that was to be pulled. When George called, "Ready, Prince!

Hi!" Prince looked around to see if all was well, braced himself for a mighty effort, pulled and strained — and out came the stump.

"How does he know how to do it?" exclaimed Jerry in amazement.

"Training," replied John. "That horse has cleared many a road around here."

"But I thought roads were — just here!" cried Jerry.

"Not in Wisconsin," laughed John, "nor in any forest country. Every road you see has been made by pulling the stumps one at a time, and by doing work you fellows are doing, too. It's work, let me tell you, lad."

While they were talking, George fastened Prince to another stump, a larger one, and the boys stopped work to watch him pull it out. Prince strained and pulled, George coaxed and commanded, but the stump didn't budge.

"Why don't you —" began Dick, who was always ready with a suggestion.

But John stopped him with a quick, "Keep still! Do you think you know more about pulling stumps than George?" The boys giggled at Dick's chagrin, but George paid no attention — he already had enough to think of, to be sure.

In his eagerness, Jerry, without realizing

what he was doing, slipped closer and closer, getting nearer and nearer the horse.

Suddenly Prince gave a mighty effort, George shouted, "Go it, old fellow!" and out came the stump with a suddenness that sent Prince reeling sideways directly against Jerry.

Down they went in a heap — horse, boy, stump, and man — for George, too, was dragged after the horse. The boys screamed, Jerry lay still, old Prince struggled to his feet, and George pulled himself out of the dirt.

"Get 'Cap'!" shouted John, and away dashed three boys in a mad race to the camp for help for Jerry.

Tim bent over his friend on one side and John on the other.

"He's all right — only winded," said John. "Here, we'll fix him." And he put both his hands around Jerry and made him begin to breathe just as football players sometimes have to have air coaxed into them after a hard play.

A minute more and Jerry was breathing as well as ever. By the time that Captain Marston arrived, a few minutes later, he was walking around feeling fit, though still a bit unsteady.

"Take it easy, Jerry," advised the captain after he had examined him carefully and

found no injuries. "It's a day's work to have old Prince fall on you. Go slow until you feel fit." So Jerry sat in the shade for a while and watched the others work, but soon they got farther along the road-to-be, and he joined them. It was more fun to work a little than to be alone.

Jerry wouldn't have missed that morning for anything, though, with his muscles unused to such work, he wasn't sorry when the first call for swimming blew, and the boys raced for camp.

Swimming with a crowd of boys who were all good at it was great fun, but dinner, served in the big, open dining hall, with more than a hundred boys all talking and laughing at once, was better fun still. Jerry had lost track of Ted, but the counselor at their table assured him that he had seen Ted twice, and that he had been having a fine time with the midgets. The younger boys had a very short work hour and had gone in swimming some time earlier. They had their long swim in the morning and a short one in the afternoon, while the older boys took a brief dip after work hours and had races and diving in the afternoon.

After dinner came an hour for writing letters or reading, and then there was a ball

game between the seniors and juniors. Jerry, whose reputation had been spread around by Tim, was invited to be right fielder.

"You can't beat him at catching," Tim assured the team. "And batting — well, you just wait and see!"

Back of the tennis courts was a fine baseball field. It had been a swamp, but two years' work by the boys had cleared and drained it and made it into a nearly perfect athletic field. On all sides were great forest trees, but the cleared space was so large that only a very wild ball would go into the brush.

Jerry came to bat third, with a man on first and another on second, and the clean, snappy ball he sent right under the hands of the waiting shortstop and directly between the two fielders brought both men in and made a home run for Jerry. That established Jerry's popularity in camp. He was not only the hero of that inning, but he would be welcome in camp any time thereafter.

The score was 3 - 0 in the first inning. It soon went to 4 - 5, with the seniors leading by one. Jerry had as good luck with his catching as with his batting, and while he didn't repeat the home run of the first inning, he did play well and do his full share.

In the seventh, when the score stood 5 - 5 with the seniors at bat, Jerry stood in "out field" on tiptoe, eyes strained for the ball that might come. Low it was, as though it would go far, and Jerry ran back to be ready for it. But he wasn't quick enough. With a crack it hit a tree back of the field and bounded off into the brush at the side. Panic-stricken, Jerry dashed in after it. He didn't know that the rules of the field allowed a ball that went into the brush to be called a foul; he thought he might be losing the game for his team, for two men were on bases, and it was a ticklish time.

Through the brush he pushed. How was a fellow ever to find a ball in such a mess as this? For while in the pine forests there is little green undergrowth, here, near the clearing, it was thick and green and tough.

"Careful, very careful. They know Old Man John will be careful."

Jerry stopped with a start. The words had sounded right beside him. Who was talking?

"Careful, very careful. Not a thing shall be lost," repeated the voice earnestly.

Jerry peered around a great tree and saw Old Man John sitting on a fallen tree trunk, his back to the ball field. Jerry could see him

fingering some papers. It almost seemed as though he was handling them lovingly. Should or should not Jerry interrupt him and ask him to help hunt for the ball? Old Man John was known to be "queer," though one of the kindest, most faithful persons living.

Fortunately Jerry didn't have to decide, for, quicker than it takes to read this, the left fielder had dashed after him, shouting, "Foul ball! Empire puts another one in play! Just let the old thing go — we'll get it afterward."

Jerry jumped with relief. His failure to catch the ball hadn't done the harm he had supposed it would, after all. The game would still go to the juniors.

He ran hurriedly back to his place, with never another thought for Old Man John and his queer mumblings.

The excited shouts of the onlookers drew others to the game, and for the last few innings there was a crowd of rooters watching the contest.

The score stood 5 - 5 until the very last inning, when Jerry on third ran in, and Tim made another run from first. The man on second had lost out by trying to steal a base two minutes before. The seniors tried in vain



*Jerry peered around a great tree and saw Old Man John
sitting on a fallen tree trunk*

to come back in the last half, but the third "out" settled it, and the juniors were victors.

Jerry modestly turned aside compliments, but down in his heart he was as proud as Punch and extremely happy. Baseball was his best sport, and it was good luck to have it come before swimming, at which he was something of a duffer as yet.

No wonder the camp boys could swim. For two counselors, expert swimmers both, stood right on the diving pier and helped each swimmer as needed. A suggestion here, a correction in form there, made a lot of difference, and Jerry made up his mind to take every chance that might be given him to swim at camp and learn new and better strokes. So far he only knew the side stroke, but he got a lesson in the Australian crawl and promise of help with diving next time he came over.

Ted went in at the midgets' pier, for it was thought best for the boys to swim with fellows of nearly their own size and skill, but the shouts of glee that came from that pier showed that those boys were having as much fun as the juniors.

After swimming the boys marched past "Grandpa" and got two large, freshly baked

cookies apiece. Grandpa was a baker of skill who for years had spent his summers at Camp Woodlands baking all the bread, pies, and cakes the boys ate. How he loved it! He not only baked all the bread and cakes and pies, but every day made the great pans of cookies that the boys devoured after swimming. Grandpa thought the best hour of the day was when he personally handed out those cookies to hungry boys.

"Grandpa may be fine for telling yarns, and I'll believe you, camp couldn't get on without him," laughed Jerry as he began on his second cooky, "but I know one thing without being told — he certainly knows how to make cookies, that man does!"

But not even good cookies, and big ones, could spoil appetites for supper, and it was a crowd of noisy, hungry boys that responded to supper call a little before six.

After supper there was an indoor ball game on the small field by the dining hall, played between seniors and counselors, and the Daniels boys stayed to watch that. Then, when the gathering twilight reminded them that soon they would be needing lights for the voyage to the island, they hunted "Cap," thanked him, and said good night.

"Come again, boys," he said kindly as they turned to go down to the dock. "I hear you're good players as well as fire fighters. Come again! Tim, you must ask them for some day next week to stay overnight."

Jerry thought that was about the best thing the captain could say, and he and Tim began at once to make plans for a second visit.

"There, now," said Jerry, when their canoe had slipped away from the dock and he and Ted were quietly paddling homeward, "I meant to ask Tim about Old Man John." And he told Ted about the incident at the time of the lost ball. "Well, it's none of our business, and I guess it's a good thing the old fellow has it on his mind to be careful, for that's a big camp and he has a lot of responsibility."

And in the excitement of telling his mother and sister all the fun of the day, and of hearing their adventures, he forgot even to speak of Old Man John again.

It had been a great day, full of work and fun and glory, and it's not surprising that Jerry's dreams got a bit mixed and made him get four home runs in one inning, and swim, Australian crawl, to the Point, where he found a roast-beef dinner served on great plates made of cookies.

THE TRIP TO EAGLE RIVER

BY the time Mr. Daniels came up for his first week-end visit with his family, they were feeling like old settlers on the island. Jerry had learned to swim so well that he was thinking of trying a trip to the Point. Of course Jean would trail him in a canoe so as to pick him up if he couldn't make it, but he thought he could. Ted had improved wonderfully and, much to his delight, could beat both his brother and his sister at diving. Jean had transplanted some plants from Star Creek in an old tub near the porch and was delighted to see that they were thriving in their new quarters. Ted caught some minnows for her and put them in the tub, so mosquitoes could not breed in the standing water. Then, on Mrs. Marston's invitation, she went over two afternoons and got a basketful of fine plants from the path where the new road was to be — arbutus, wintergreen, ground pine, tiny saplings — many lovely things, each so welcome on the island.

Jerry had had a hard time getting his radio plans. The letter which he had supposed contained them, and which was by mistake

delivered at camp, was never found. Captain Marston remembered putting it in the safe, and thought he had later given it to Old Man John to take to the island. But when asked about it, Old Man John only shook his head and seemed so hurt to have any question arise about the safety of anything that Jerry gave up and wrote for another set. There was a chance, of course, that the letter might have been something else, even an advertisement, and that the plans had never arrived.

So Jerry wrote to his father for another set, and as soon as this was received, he set busily to work getting his outfit in shape. It wasn't so hard after he had studied the directions carefully. Tim came over two or three times to help, and with some much needed advice from one of the camp counselors the outfit was installed. Jerry had not as yet been able to get it just perfectly, but he had already communicated with Watch Mount Hill, ten miles away, where government foresters keep watch, day and night, for forest fires.

"Next time we have a fire," Jerry promised, "we can radio the government fire fighters and get help."

"Humph!" replied Jean scornfully. "We

could put a fire out while they were on the way."

"Guess you are about right," admitted Jerry, "but all the same a radio is fun to have, and maybe it will be useful some day too — the summer isn't over yet." And very contentedly he went on making it work better and better.

"When your father comes," said Mrs. Daniels one morning of the second week after their arrival, "he will want to stay right here on Plum, as he has so little time. But you and I don't mind exploring. Why don't you get an auto and drive to Eagle River? They say there are very good markets there, even though it is a small town, and perhaps I can get some better grocery supplies, which I really need."

"Charlie drives over there on camp errands nearly every week," suggested Jerry. (Charlie was one of the student helpers at camp.) "Maybe he would take passengers some time."

Mrs. Daniels liked that idea, and Jerry paddled over later in the day to inquire. While he was gone a messenger arrived from a neighboring island with an invitation for Mrs. Daniels for luncheon and an afternoon visit with some ladies from around the lake.

They were all friends of her brother's family, although strangers to Mrs. Daniels, and they wanted her to share their good times. She was happy to send back a note of acceptance by the messenger. And as she stood on the dock watching him start away in his Evinrude, a call from the direction of camp attracted her attention. It was Jerry, and he was shouting about something that evidently pleased him very much.

"We can go as soon as we have lunch," he repeated as he drew nearer. "Charlie's going this very day, and he says he can take us as well as not, 'cause nobody else wants to go. There's a swimming meet this afternoon, and all the fellows want to stay for it."

"Is Charlie responsible enough to take you all without a grown person?" asked Mrs. Daniels anxiously.

"I should say he is!" exclaimed Jerry. "Why, Mother, he's a senior in college and a class marshal and *everything*! Nothing bad ever happens if Charlie is around."

"That is a big recommendation," laughed Mrs. Daniels. "How many of you can go?"

"All of us," replied Jerry. "All four of us, and we leave at one o'clock."

"I wish I *could* go," answered Mrs. Daniels,

"but I just accepted an invitation to a luncheon party over on the next island. I wonder if Jean had better go without me?"

"Surely," said Jerry, "'cause, you see, Miss Huntland, the camp nurse, is going. It's a seven-passenger car. She's going for some supplies for the hospital storeroom, Tim said. Charlie said maybe Tim could go, too, if there was room coming back. He'd have to get 'Cap's' list first and see what kind of things there were to bring home."

As it turned out, there was ample room for Tim, too, and he didn't mind missing the meet, for he had never been to Eagle River, as most of the fellows had, and he wanted the fun of the trip.

The start was made from the garage, back of camp, promptly at one. Charlie had the precious list, Miss Huntland and Jean had theirs, and everybody else had himself only, and no duties to worry him. On the front seat of the car, put there by thoughtful Mrs. Marston, was a box of fruit, sandwiches, and cookies. A note just inside stated, "First aid if you are late for supper." It didn't look so interesting just then, for memory of dinner was still satisfying, but each person who peeked into the well-filled interior felt more

comfortable on learning that that particular sort of first aid was at hand.

The road out from camp was very bad for the first quarter of a mile. The new road was to be ready by fall, and not much attention was being paid to the old narrow trail through the woods. But in a few minutes they turned out onto the open highway and from then on traveled on a good state road all the way to Eagle River.

It was a beautiful drive, past lakes and woods and rivers and creeks, and Charlie made the scenery even more interesting by telling tales all the way. Here there had been a forest fire — see the charred tree trunks? Well — and thereupon hung a tale. There was a tiny little brook — see that log over it? Well, that was where — and he told a tale of campers who took that brook in canoes one summer when many heavy rains had made it deep. See that spot over across Lost Lake? That was where Edwards fell in when they camped there overnight last year.

"You've been everywhere, haven't you?" asked Ted admiringly.

"Well, not exactly everywhere," said Charlie modestly, "but I've been around a little in my day."

It was not surprising that with such good company the twenty-five miles to Eagle River seemed disarmingly short, and much too soon they rode into the little town and stopped on the main street.

"Now, I have 'Cap's' list," said Charlie as he got out of the car, "and you'll not see me until I have bought everything on it. It may take an hour and it may take two. Can't tell. You folks may do anything you like."

"Jean may go with me until my errands are finished," suggested Miss Huntland, "and then we can explore the town."

"I have a list of Mother's" said Jean modestly. "Mother said we were not to bother unless we had plenty of time, but it's groceries and things she couldn't get in Sayner."

"Time!" laughed Charlie. "Your middle name is time right now. You'll probably be sending a cop after me before I get through. Now you fellows make yourselves happy and don't have too many ice-cream sodas. And come back to the car when you can't find anything better to do." And with that he was off on his errands.

Jean and Miss Huntland set out on theirs, and Tim, Jerry, and Ted began exploring the town. It was such a tiny place that when they

had walked four blocks they had traveled twice over all the business section. Fortunately there were interesting things in the windows — camp outfits, hunters' supplies, and just the sort of things a person would want to see up there. The boys each bought a hunter's shirt, flannel shirts with great checks. Ted chose red and black and the older boys white and black — regular checkerboard squares. Real hunters need to wear such garments so they can easily be seen through the trees and not be shot at by mistake. Then Jerry purchased some more films and some wire for his radio. It wasn't working as well as he had hoped it would. Charlie thought the atmospheric conditions of such high land as that around Plum Lake might make a difference, but Jerry was determined to keep on trying until he could get in touch with some place at a greater distance than Watch Mount Hill.

In an hour the boys went back to the car. Charlie was puzzling over how to get his many purchases put away in so small a space.

"Through already?" asked Tim.

"I should say not!" replied Charlie. "Not by an hour. But I'm trying to get this dynamite packed in here before I start out for the other things."

"Dynamite! Here?" cried Ted. "I thought dynamite was the stuff that blew folks up."

"It is," replied Charlie briefly. "Only this really is intended for stumps instead of folks, if you don't mind. 'Cap' had me get a hundred pounds and two hundred caps. They used a lot more in making that new road than he thought they would. See, each of these boxes contains twenty-five pounds. There, now, I guess that'll ride. Now for the rest of the list."

An hour later, when all five had had sodas, bought fruit, and finished errands, Charlie dashed up to the car.

"Just one more item," he said, "a dozen cheap cotton hats — and we're off. If you like, you may all get in to be ready, and we'll make tracks for home."

"But you haven't had a soda!" objected Ted.

"Guess I'll have to live without it then," laughed Charlie as he disappeared in the general store to buy the hats.

Five minutes later they were headed homeward.

"I suppose we might speed and get home for supper," he said as they turned out of the town. "But what's the use when we have

supper with us? We'll stop somewhere along the Wisconsin River and eat our sandwiches. I know a good place. I spotted it as we came over."

"There, now!" he exclaimed, after he had driven a couple of miles. "That's what he gets for not putting it on my list. Kewpie wanted me to get some songbooks. He's lost fifteen, and that doesn't leave enough for assembly on Sunday. I told him to put it on the list, and he didn't. Well, it's no use going back now. Maybe somebody'll be going down to Minocqua in a day or two."

"Queer about our losing things," mused Tim as they sped along. "We didn't lose anything last year. And now this year a lot of the fellows lose things. Nothing so valuable, of course, for 'Cap' makes us keep valuables in the safe — just music or letters or plans. Dick lost the plan he made for a birdhouse, and he was just as careful! He thought not a soul knew where it was but Old Man John. But all the same it's gone, and he had to make another one."

"I lost a letter, too," began Jerry, but just then a big car honked to pass, and as the road was narrow there by the river he stopped talking until it should get by.

"Look out there, you folks; better see to —" the rest was lost in the distance. But it was plain that the passing motorists had called to them that something was wrong with their car.

"I ought to have looked at that back wheel before we started," said Charlie thoughtfully. "'Cap' said last night the bolt needed tightening, and George was to do it before we started. When we come to a wider place in the road we'll stop —" But that sentence was never finished, for right at that minute the back wheel, which, unnoticed, had been getting more and more wobbly, parted company with the car and rolled off into the river. The car dropped with a thud to the center of the road and all the occupants were jarred severely.

"The dynamite!" screamed Ted, who hadn't forgotten their load for a single minute.

"Dynamite!" exclaimed Miss Huntland. "Where's any dynamite?"

"Under the front seat," replied Charlie, nursing a bruised wrist. "Only a hundred pounds though," he added comfortingly.

"Well, evidently it didn't hurt us," said Miss Huntland, her common sense coming to the rescue, "but it did give me a turn for a minute to think of having such a load. It

surely is lucky for us that you had slowed down. What are you going to do about that wheel, Charlie?" she added.

"Just two things," said Charlie, briskly climbing out of the tilted car. "I'm going to fish it out of the river and then put it back on the car. Something tells me we shan't make any great headway on three wheels."

Jean giggled. She liked Charlie's sly fun, and she didn't one bit mind having things happen as long as nobody was hurt. What fun it would be to tell the Scouts about the wheel flying off into the river and being fished out!

"Let's get the wheel," suggested Tim. "Jerry and I can wade for it. That river isn't deep. Mostly we can hop from one stone to another."

"Go to it," replied Charlie, "and, while you're doing that, I'll jack up the car and hunt a bolt. Speed's the idea. We're not making ourselves any too popular by staying in the narrowest place on the whole road, I know that."

So Jerry and Tim pulled off shoes and socks and started to wade in, while Ted helped Charlie, and Jean and Miss Huntland made an applauding audience.

ONLY A PATCH OF LIGHT

GETTING an automobile wheel out of the middle of the Wisconsin River wasn't as easy as the boys had supposed it would be. Tim had thought they would sit down on that sandy strip, take off shoes and socks, jump from stone to stone to where the wheel leaned against a great rock, and bring the thing out. The first part of the program went very well. The river appeared shallow there; great bowlders jutted out of the water; and here and there flat, smooth rocks made ripples as the river dashed by. The bowlders were all right. It was the flat rocks that made the trouble.

Tim jumped from one rock to another, then to a third, and he was almost touching the wheel. Jerry followed close behind — a little too close, for he didn't guess Tim's speed quite right and landed on the same flat rock close behind his friend. His foot slipped from under him, hit Tim, and off they went, both of them, kersplash! into the water.

Jean shrieked; Miss Huntland shouted directions; a man from a waiting auto behind their own took off his coat and was ready to

jump in — all before Tim and Jerry, kicking and scrambling, came up.

But they were up to stay; no rescuers would be needed for them. Sputtering and laughing at the mishap, they crawled up on the rock from which they had slipped, watching carefully about balance this time, and then, holding Tim's hand as a steadier, Jerry reached out and grasped the missing wheel.

"How did it get there?" asked a curious motorist who had just come up.

Charlie stopped his work to look at the man.

"We got so tired of rapid motion, my friend," he said soberly, "that we took off one wheel and let it roll a while. Thought we'd let it get speed out of its system, you see."

Jean giggled, and the man laughed.

"Its enthusiasm is dampened, at least," he said as the boys picked their way to shore with the dripping wheel. "I suppose if you're clever enough to think up yarns like that, you can put a wheel on by yourself?" he inquired good-naturedly.

"*I think* I can," replied Charlie, "but there's no telling. What I'm looking for is the quickest way to do it."

He needn't have worried, for, having found the bolt and made the car ready, he had to

work only a few minutes to make everything snug and tight and get the car moved out of the roadway so that the waiting motorists could pass by.

"Now we'd better see about these dripping boys," said Miss Huntland.

"Wrap 'em up in rugs and let 'em soak," suggested Charlie. "It's a warm day. It won't hurt them."

"Couldn't we eat first?" asked Ted, his food at Eagle River completely forgotten.

"That isn't a bad idea," agreed Miss Huntland. "Jerry, you and Tim sit here high and dry on this big stone. The sun is still hot and you can drip a while. Then, when we drive, you can be well wrapped, and you won't chill a bit."

"I didn't miss my dip even if I did go to Eagle River," laughed Tim. "Only don't any of you dare tell, or the fellows will tease. Miss Huntland, you cross your heart to die you won't even hint. And Charlie —"

"He's the one that will tease you," remarked Jean sagely. "Better make him promise."

"Charlie, if you tell —" Tim hesitated, trying to think up something awful enough to threaten — "I'll get the fellows from the junior camp — all of them! — and we'll crawl into

your tent at night and dump you in the drink!
You just see if we don't!"

"Terrible!" laughed Charlie. "All right, fellows, mum's the word. Now didn't we say something about food?"

Miss Huntland opened the box, passed around the paper napkins, and the little group sat down for supper. And if the picnic party at the river's edge, with the two dripping boys drying in the sun, attracted the curious glances of passers-by, nobody's feelings were hurt. The boys thought it great fun. Now that the worry of being told on was over, they could laugh at their ducking.

When the last sandwich, the last bit of fruit, and the last cooky were devoured, the napkins were gathered up and buried beneath a big stone, and the party wandered down the roadside, picking wild berries from the bushes. Then they washed hands and faces and climbed back into the car. Fortunately there were two great woolen rugs at hand, and Miss Huntland wrapped both boys tightly and had them sit in the back seat where the wind would get less chance at them. That gave Ted a chance to sit in front with Charlie, and he felt very happy and important at the change.

"We'll be dry before we get home," predicted Tim. And he was nearly right, for when they climbed stiffly out of the car some time later, and unwrapped the folds of the great robes, their clothes seemed almost dry.

"Better come around by the infirmary," suggested Miss Huntland, "and I'll give you some hot chocolate. These boys must have it, even though it is a warm night, and maybe you'd all like a cup."

Charlie thought he ought not to take the time, as he was anxious to report to 'Cap' and arrange for the care of the goods he had bought. But the others had nothing to hurry them, so with the help of Tim's handy flashlight, which he always carried with him, they found the path and reached the infirmary. It was still light over the lake, but under the great pines the shadows lay dark, and strangers to the paths needed a light.

Chocolate was quickly made, and a box of crackers completed the feast. Jean helped the boys pull their shirt collars into place so that the other boys would not suspect the dipping they had had. Probably no one would notice, but Jerry and Tim didn't intend to take chances.

"I don't have to be in until first call," said

Tim as they started home. "I'm going to take you over to the island. Ted, you and Jean can take your own canoe. Dick will go with Jerry and me, so I can have company back."

He gave Jean an extra flashlight, and they got into the canoes. Out on the water there was still a great deal of light. The stars were blinking out, one by one, and the rose and lavender haze of twilight still lighted the sky. Lights would not yet be needed there.

"What's that?" asked Ted suddenly.

"Haven't you got used to that yet?" laughed Jean comfortably. "That's just a loon. He always sounds like a ghost or something to me, too, until I remember."

"I didn't mean the loon," replied Ted scornfully. "I know a loon, too. I mean that." He pointed over toward the Point, where the deserted cabin lay in the shadows.

Jean strained eyes and ears, but not a sound did she hear or a thing did she see.

"You're dreaming, Teddie," she said laughingly. "What did you think it was?"

"I thought I saw a light," said Ted.

"Where?" asked Jerry, whose canoe was so near that he had heard what was said.

"At the cabin," replied Ted.

"You certainly are seeing things," laughed

Tim. "Why, there hasn't been anybody in that cabin for years! I asked 'Cap' yesterday. I'll beat you to the Point," he added.

Jerry and Tim were paddling, with Dick taking it easy in the bottom of the canoe, and Jean and Ted were a bit ahead.

"We'll take that much handicap and beat you to the Point," cried Jerry.

Jean took a good full stroke, and another — not for nothing had she and Ted practiced together when Jerry was playing with the boys. They kept their lead and were pulling out even more, when Ted nearly upset the canoe by stopping excitedly and whispering, "I wasn't seeing things! There it is now!"

With a quick turn of his paddle Tim avoided a collision and then he said, "Say, there, Ted, when you get excited like that you want to be on shore! Don't do any old hopping-around stunts near my canoe. I can swim out, but who would want two —"

"Good night, ladies! Good night, ladies!" Jean plunged with all her might into the old song, the only thing she could think of on the spur of the moment, and so surprised Tim that he stopped without completing his sentence. In a second he saw what she had done. He had forgotten that Dick was along, and

with another word he himself would have told that he had fallen into the river. Or at any rate he would have told enough to make Dick curious, and then there would have been a mess. Girls really were good for something sometimes — no doubt of that!

Hurriedly he joined in the song, and then Jerry, also grasping the situation, added his voice, and the serenade, which surprised Dick as much as the others, was finished.

"I tell you what we might do," suggested Tim, a glow of gratitude to Jean making him more than usually amiable. "Just to keep Ted from dreaming he saw lights, let's land on the Point and show him there's nothing around."

Jean wasn't so pleased with that suggestion. She had no desire to visit the cabin again — certainly not in the dim twilight. But Jerry took up the idea and put the canoe about. She didn't like to be a poor sport, and Ted was plainly delighted. He would not mind running into danger any day if he could only thereby prove himself right.

Hurriedly they beached the canoes, Jean making only a feeble attempt at a protest.

"Are you sure 'Cap' won't mind your doing this?" she asked.

"Sure not," replied Tim. "I wouldn't do

anything 'gainst rules. We're allowed to land here if we don't do anything damaging. Come on, let's explore!"

So weird was the effect of the twilight as they crept up under the great trees that unconsciously the five children tiptoed over the matted pine needles, making no sound as they drew nearer and nearer the gloomy cabin.

"Where did you think you saw a light?" asked Tim, unconsciously lowering his voice.

"On the porch," whispered Ted.

"Then if we walk the whole length of the porch and don't see anything, will you say you're wrong?" asked Dick.

"I will that," answered Ted.

They stepped up to the porch at the end nearest the lake.

Across the porch they started, Jean ready to giggle, half with nervousness and half with amusement at their folly. Anybody could see that nobody was there with a light.

Past the great closed-up door they walked, on down, opposite the window.

And there they stopped, spellbound. Inside the cabin, in plain sight on the floor, was a circle of light, the light from an electric torch. And as they stared the light moved slowly over toward the stairway.



In silence the three crept up to the cabin

CAMPING ON RAZOR BACK

NOW, aren't you silly!" exclaimed Mrs. Daniels as the children recounted, for about the fortieth time, the happenings of the evening before. "I can think of a dozen reasons, all perfectly simple, why some one might have been in the cabin last evening."

"Well, Mother," replied Jerry, "if you think it's perfectly simple for some one to be walking around with an electric torch in a deserted cabin, I don't. Who was it?"

"It might have been the owner himself," suggested Mrs. Daniels. "Didn't Mrs. Marston say old Colonel Dickson had a son living in St. Louis? Or it might have been Captain Marston. You didn't stay long enough to find out."

"Indeed we did *not!*" cried Jean grimly, and then she laughed. For now their fear and their wild dash to the safety of their canoes seemed really funny, although it had seemed anything indeed but funny the night before.

"You people had better forget your precious mystery for a minute and hear my news," said Mrs. Daniels, as she stepped to the table

and picked up a letter. "This came yesterday, but you were so excited I waited until morning to read it to you."

The letter was from Mr. Daniels to tell them that he was coming up a day ahead of the time planned to take a camping trip — an overnight trip — and that he expected the boys to have everything ready for a start soon after his arrival Friday noon.

"Why, that's today!" exclaimed Jerry.

"Of course it's today," agreed Mrs. Daniels. "The train is due at twelve-fifteen, and it's now nearly eight. It's lucky we've talked with people about camping, so that we know exactly what to do and what to take. I made out a grocery list last evening, and you children looked over Uncle Bob's camping outfit the other day and found that it was all right."

"But we don't know where we'll go," said Jean.

"I talked with Mrs. Holden about that yesterday at luncheon," said Mrs. Daniels. "She says the best way is to start up Razor Back — you know that's the long, winding lake over there," she pointed toward the northwest. "There is a path from the hotel to Razor Back, and we can get a cart for carrying our things over from Plum. From Razor Back we can

get to Lone Lake with only a very short portage."

That seemed a good plan. The point now was to get to work. Time never waits for persons who sit and talk.

While Jerry and Ted got out the curious yoke that fitted on the shoulders of the person who was to carry the canoe, and Jean helped them wash the camping utensils, Mrs. Daniels packed food in tins and measured flour, salt, and sugar for tomorrow's flapjacks.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Jean as she suddenly spied the clock. "It's only fifteen minutes until train time. Jerry, you'd better fly!"

So "fly" Jerry did, down to the boathouse to the Evinrude. Of course the gasoline tank was empty, and filling that took seven precious minutes, and then the wind was against him, and he made poor time. But the train was a bit late; it whistled just as he bumped against the station pier. Flinging his line over the nearest post, Jerry dashed up the hill just in time to see his father and — could it be possible? — his favorite uncle, Frank, getting off the train.

"That's how all this happened," admitted Mr. Daniels, as he saw Jerry's delighted amazement. "When I found Frank could

come today, I thought I'd better come, too, so we could do our first camping with an experienced person. I wanted to surprise your mother — I do hope there's enough to eat."

Of course there was; and never did beef-steak, browned potatoes, and green apple pie taste better than on that little island porch that sunny day.

They lingered at the table half an hour after the last bit was eaten, hearing about the children's fun and mystery and making plans for future sport. Then the men got into rough camping clothes, Mrs. Daniels and Jean cleared up the meal and repacked some camp supplies, so as to put in extra food for Uncle Frank, and by a quarter past three they were ready to put off.

Jerry took down the flag. Jean locked the door and put the key in its regular place on a shelf in the boathouse. Then, with Uncle Frank and the two boys in one canoe and Mr. and Mrs. Daniels and Jean in the other, the party pushed off and the fun was on.

The portage to Razor Back was easy, for the hotel cart was on the pier, and with so many helpers, loading and unloading were quick work.

Razor Back Lake was even wilder than

GREGORY



Jean helped Jerry and Ted wash the camp dishes

Plum Lake — not a sign of man was to be seen anywhere. As the two canoes slipped out from behind the shelter of the Point, the children could see off to the left traces of the terrible forest fire of twelve years before. Great charred tree trunks towered above the young, new growth, suggesting the mighty forests that once made this lake a spot of rare beauty.

"The fire came from the west," said Mrs. Daniels. "I have often heard Brother Bob tell about it. Very quickly it spread over the mainland and then with a terrible roar jumped to those two islands over there."

"But has all that green stuff grown since?" asked Jean in amazement.

"Every single bit," replied her mother. "Bob wrote that it almost seemed like magic the way greenness seemed to spring up within a few days."

It was great fun to paddle the length of that strange lake. Not a person did they see nor a sound did they hear save the call of wild birds and the echo of their own voices. Civilization seemed miles and miles away from them.

Skirting the north shore some time later, they found a bit of sandy beach just right

for landing. With hatchets they cleared the way up the bank to the open spaces under the few larger trees. Then Mr. Daniels put in the grub stake and started a tiny fire, while the children, advised by Uncle Frank, gathered wood and, when the fire was burning brightly, pine boughs for beds.

So soon after their big dinner no one was supposed to be hungry, but two hours of paddling and an hour's stiff work making camp gave everyone such an appetite that baked potatoes and onions, boiled chops, and, later, cocoa and cookies tasted wonderfully good.

The dishes washed and put away, they built up the fire and gathered around for a sing that lasted until the children were so sleepy that Uncle Frank banked the fire for the night and ordered everyone to bed.

Next morning Jerry begged for a chance at making flapjacks. So Uncle Frank showed him how to heat a flat stone, how to grease it with bacon drippings, and how to brown the flapjacks to a turn.

"Now I guess old Tim will sit up and take notice," boasted Jerry proudly as, after several indifferent attempts, he at last secured a nearly perfect cake, brown and smoking

hot, and smelling so good that he got orders for all he could make.

"You folks keep it dark," he said to Jean and Ted, "and we'll not give Tim a hint I've ever tried to cook. Then when they take me out and think they'll have a time with a green-horn, I'll fool them." And he proudly took another batch of cakes from the stone.

It was fun to study the map with Uncle Frank and to hunt out, by trees and various landmarks, just where they were, and how they were to reach the narrow portage over to Lone Lake. There had been no time for that work the night before.

When they had decided upon the direction, they broke camp, packed supplies, and made the trip to the narrow strip of land where they were to portage. Of course, that wasn't so easy. Canoes and utensils are heavy to carry. But it was fun, all the same, for it was a novelty, and the campers — all six of them — had a sense of victory when the re-loaded canoes glided out into the rippling water of Lone Lake. Again the trip was on.

Lone Lake was one of a chain of three lakes all connected by tiny creeks, so there were no more portages to be made. At one place on the second creek they thought they

would have to unload, for a fallen tree lay directly across the course. But by repacking their loads, making things flatter, and lying flat in the canoes, they found that they could just scrape under. So that difficulty was safely overcome.

Day camp was made in an inviting nook on the second lake. Soon a fire was blazing, and the delicious smell of broiling ham made everyone even hungrier than ever — if that could be possible. Night camp was made at the head of the three lakes at a spot where boys from the camp had camped before. It was a real help to find boughs ready for beds, stones piled for an oven, and brush along the shore cleared away. Uncle Frank and Jerry used the extra time for fishing, and caught two fine bass for supper.

“How I wish we didn’t have to go home today,” sighed Jean as they pushed off from shore the next morning.

“But my train goes at seven this evening,” said her father, “though I must admit that I am no more keen about taking it than you are about going home.

“What’s up, Frank?” he added, as he saw his brother studying the shore line.

“I am just planning,” replied Uncle Frank.

"Instead of going back the way we came, let's go down Star Lake. I don't know why I didn't think of it before. Then we shan't have to portage. We can paddle right down Star Creek to Plum Lake, and that will be shorter. Now, if I can find the creek — Ah! There it is! There's our creek!"

A wild duck suddenly taking to wing showed where the tiny creek left the lake, and it was an easy matter to follow from there on.

Dinner, eaten on the bank of Star Lake, finished up every particle of food, and of course lightened the job of packing and made more room in the canoes.

"Now we've simply *got* to get home for supper," said Ted so determinedly that everyone laughed.

The campers crept out of Star Creek into Plum Lake at exactly four-thirty — plenty of time for cleaning up, enjoying supper, and making the train.

"You boys may go over to Razor Back in the morning and bring home the cart," said Mr. Daniels. "Be sure you don't forget to do it early, as it might be needed."

Jerry promised, and he also volunteered to clean up all the camp things so they would be in readiness for another trip.

"I wish you weren't going away," sighed Jean as they waited for the train some time later. "Camping was fun, but just think of the things we haven't done! We were going to show you the deserted cabin — it looks like a mystery cabin, even though Mother does laugh at us. And I just know if you could see it you'd understand."

"I'll be up again, Jeanie," said her father affectionately, "so don't you be disappointed. Next time I come I'll stay two weeks, and we can camp and hunt mysteries and have a glorious time. And you can find lots to do in the meantime — I know you will. And if you solve the mystery before I come back," he added, as the train noisily pulled in, "be sure to write me all about it."

Of course the children had told their father and uncle all they knew about the deserted cabin. And of course as a result they had been most unmercifully teased about being detectors.

"It's all right," said Jerry, as he and Jean followed Ted and their mother down toward the waiting boat, "they can laugh and tease, but I guess they would sit up and take notice if we really *did* find a mystery there, now wouldn't they, Jean?"

"Jerry," said Jean suddenly, "let's go over there tomorrow, *sure*, and see if we can't find out who goes there and what they do. We ought to. Folks do in books. Let's walk right into the place in broad daylight and hunt until we know what's going on."

Jerry looked at his sister with admiration. Girls, some girls, surely were good fellows.

"You're on!" he exclaimed. "Tomorrow we do it."

THE SECRET CUPBOARD

BUT it was afternoon before they actually had time for mysteries.

In the first place, they overslept. Camping is great fun, but regular beds do feel good after two nights on beds of pine boughs, and the Daniels family slept straight through the camp bugles. Then the boys went over to Razor Back Lake and brought the cart back to the hotel. Mrs. Daniels thought camping things should be cleaned and put away in their proper places ready for future use, and by that time it was after eleven o'clock.

"Why not wait until after dinner?" suggested Jerry, as Jean announced that she was ready to paddle to the Point. "We shouldn't have time to do much there, and in an hour I could finish setting up the sending part of my radio. It might come in handy any day, you know, Jean."

"I know you're crazy about it, that's all I know, Jerry Daniels," she replied disappointedly. "What will a radio do toward figuring out a mystery — tell me that!" But when she saw how much he wanted to do it she added good-naturedly, "Never mind, Jerry. I was

silly to be cross. We really shouldn't have time before dinner. So you finish your set and then, just as soon as the dishes are done, off we go."

Just as they were getting up from the table after dinner, Jerry received a feeble message from Tim, by radio, telling him to come to camp at once.

"Tim ought to fix his as I have mine," said Jerry as he tried to get all Tim was saying. "He can't even understand that I say I can't come.

"I'll tell you what let's do," he continued. "We'll go by camp on the way to the Point and see what he wants."

"Then skip right along," suggested Mrs. Daniels. "Dishes aren't anything, and you want to get to the Point soon, I know."

So, with a hug and kiss of appreciation, the three children hurried off and launched their canoe. It was not long before they were nearing camp.

"Hi there!" cried Tim, when they got in hailing distance. "More thrills! What do you think? Kewpie's lost a lot of music, and the doctor says some of the important supplies are gone from the infirmary! And they were all put away as carefully as you please!

The cupboard was locked and only 'Cap' and Old Man John had the key."

"Where's 'Cap'?" asked Jerry.

"He isn't here and we're all that —"

"Now, look here, Tim, don't you get so warmed up," suggested a capable-looking counselor who was working on the dock against which Jerry had pulled his canoe. "Just the fact that a few more things are missing doesn't mean a thing!"

"But the fellows say 'Cap' has gone to the county seat, and that means to get a constable!" cried Tim, still much excited.

"It means no such thing," retorted the counselor. "Now you listen and get this straight. Remember that man who set fire to the hillside a few days ago? He wants to buy Colonel Dickson's place over there and—"

"But he can't," interrupted Jean. "That's our mystery and it's deserted."

"He could buy it for all your mystery," replied the counselor, "but it's likely to stay deserted, as a matter of fact, because they can't find the deeds to give a clear title. 'Cap' has been trying to help the men all day, and that's the reason why he couldn't bother with looking for missing music and supplies. 'Cap' thinks that if they go over to the county

seat they can get some duplicates — though he isn't sure, and even then the title won't be as satisfactory as if they got the original deeds. They left about one minute before you came.

"Now run along and sell your papers, or solve your mystery, or anything you want, but don't mix any constables into this camp — they don't belong," added the counselor.

"Well," said Tim hesitatingly.

Suddenly Jean sat up straight.

"You get in with us, Timothy Stuart," she commanded. "I have an idea."

Tim jumped into the canoe, and Jerry pushed off so quickly that there was no time for questions. Jerry knew that when Jean talked like that something was coming.

"Now stop and let's plan," said Jean, when they were out of hearing of everyone on the camp dock. "Have you told him" (pointing back to the counselor) "about the light we saw in the cabin that night, Tim?"

"Not a word," replied Tim, "not to a person."

"Then of course he doesn't think there is any mystery," said Jean. "How could he? And there isn't going to be a mystery long! Can't you boys see it's as plain as day?"

As plain as day? The boys stared at her. They didn't even know what she was talking about!

"What's plain?" demanded Jerry.

"Where the lost things are," answered Jean impatiently. "Every single one has been something Old Man John was to take care of — I was thinking of it when you were working on your radio this morning, Jerry. Letters, papers, music, and now infirmary supplies. And Old Man John is the only person we have seen in the cabin."

"Um-m," said Jerry, thoughtfully, "but where could he hide anything? You saw there wasn't a bit of furniture, to say nothing of a cupboard, in the cabin."

"Of course he *is* queer," admitted Tim. "We boys know that, but where could he put anything over there, even if he wanted to hide it?"

"That's for us to find out," said Jean determinedly. And, fired by her enthusiasm, the children paddled briskly toward the Point. They landed, secured the canoe safely, but so that it could be launched quickly if necessary, and then hurried up to the cabin.

"Let's go clear around first," suggested Jerry. So they started around the back way

only to stop in amazement when they saw the back door wide open.

"Some one's there now," whispered Ted.

"Listen!" said Jerry. "He's in the living room!"

"It's Old Man John," said Jean.

"He won't notice us," said Tim. "Let's slip in and and see what he is doing."

Walking on tiptoe, the four children crept through the kitchen. At the door of the living room they paused. Old Man John was there.

The room was wide and long. In the middle, on the side nearest them, was a great stone fireplace. Just at the right of the fireplace a wide stairway led up to the second floor. Under the stairs, where a closet would naturally be, was a set of shelves for books — but of course the books had long since disappeared; they had been carried away when the Dickson family moved out.

Old Man John was standing there, in front of those empty shelves, mumbling and feeling for something, gently running his hand up and down the left side of the shelves, feeling, feeling. The children watched him, fascinated.

Suddenly, so suddenly they could hardly

believe their eyes, the shelves moved outward, like a door, and behind them was a cupboard lined with tin and fitted with three narrow shelves. Having opened the cupboard, Old Man John turned slightly, reached into his pocket for something — and saw the children.

"You want to make sure they are safe, too?" he asked, not the least disturbed at being discovered.

Not knowing what else to say, the children replied, "Yes," and walked over to the queer cupboard. There on the shelves, carefully sorted as to size, were all the missing things. At least the children thought they were all there, and a quick checking over proved them right. Letters, music, bandages, and medicine — there they were, safe as could be.

Proudly Old Man John pointed to the contents of the cupboard.

"They tell Old Man John to be careful," he said. "Not a thing is lost — not one. John keep carefully." And with that sentence the children understood the whole story. The Old Man, faithful above all things, had put away the things intrusted to his particular care, thinking thus to do his full duty by the trust. A lump rose in Jerry's throat, and he wasn't even ashamed of it. Would they

all be as careful as Old Man John when they grew old? He wondered —

But Jean's sharp eyes spied something.

"What's this, Jerry?" she demanded, as she picked up a worn yellow envelope from the lower shelf.

"Original deeds for Dickson properties," she read.

"That's what they were hunting today!" cried Jerry excitedly.

"We've got to catch 'Cap' and tell him about those papers!" said Jean.

"Surely," admitted Tim, "but how? He was on his way half an hour ago."

"Which way did he go?" questioned Jerry eagerly.

"There is only one way," answered Tim, "by Watch Mount Hill. But a lot of good that does us. What have you on your mind?" he added, as he saw that Jerry had some idea.

"Could the men in the lookout on the hill reach him?" asked Jerry, ignoring the question.

"Yes," replied Tim. "Everyone knows 'Cap's' car. They could catch him easy as pie just when he goes along there. All you have to do is to fly over there — it's only ten miles, you know," he added sarcastically.

"I'm not going to fly," said Jerry, "but something else is."

"I know!" cried Jean. "Radio! Hurry!"

Even faster than on the night when they were so frightened, the children dashed down to their canoe, leaving bewildered Old Man John to his treasures. Quickly they set out, and with their fastest paddling made good time to Five Pines and the radio.

"I'll never interrupt your work again, Jerry Daniels," said Jean as they made a landing. "Just think, if you hadn't finished that sending set, you couldn't do a thing!"

Silently the three children watched while Jerry tuned in, got Watch Mount Hill, and gave his message.

"Catch Captain Marston when he passes there in a few minutes. Tell him to turn back to Sayner. Very important." The watcher on the lookout so far away repeated the message and added word that Captain Marston's car was just then in sight.

"That means hurry for us," said Tim, "for there's a short cut to Sayner, and it won't take him long to get back."

Launching the canoe again as they called a hasty, "We'll tell you about it later," to Mrs. Daniels, the children set out for Sayner.

As they were the speediest, the two older boys paddled, and Jean and Ted did their part by sitting perfectly still, so that no motion would hinder their progress.

Just as they rounded the point by Sayner, Captain Marston's car rolled onto the pier, and the captain himself jumped out.

"What is it?" he asked, a bit anxiously, for certainly he had never before been called back in such a way.

"We found the deeds," began Tim.

"And the music and letters and everything," added Jerry.

"They're in the deserted cabin," continued Tim, "in a secret cupboard — Old Man John has them safe as can be, behind the book shelves, and we thought you would want to know so he could buy the Point." Tim pointed to the stranger in the car.

"Oh, dear," cried Jean suddenly, "we never thought! Now they'll live in the cabin, and it won't be deserted, and there isn't any more mystery!" Jean looked as sorrowful as if she had lost her last friend.

"But just think what a record you have made as a detector," said Captain Marston, smiling at her. "You'll be doing all our detecting from now on!"

"We might set up in business," laughed Jean, quickly interested, "'Jerry and Jean, woodsmen detectors. Orders taken — by radio'!"

"And rewards paid," added Captain Marston, "by a camp supper this evening with the Daniels Detecting Company as guests of honor!"

